

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/066 W

-----044288 072030Z /53

R 071923Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4156
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: SUAREZ EMERGES VICTORIOUS FROM 2-DAY PLENARY

REF: MADRID 3687

1. SUMMARY: THE RESPONSES OF SUAREZ' PRINCIPAL POLITICAL
ADVERSARIES TO HIS APRIL 5 SPEECH (REFTEL), PARTICULARLY
THOSE OF GONZALEZ (PSOE) AND CARRILLO (PCE), MADE IT
CLEAR THAT THEY ACCEPTED HIS CALL FOR A CONTINUATION OF
CONSENSUS POLITICS UNTIL THE CONSTITUTION IS APPROVED
IN REFERENDUM. FRAGA (AP) PREDICTABLY WAS TOUGHEST ON
THE GOVT, IN EFFECT CALLING ON SUAREZ TO LINK UP WITH
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AP IN ORDER TO GOVERN WITH A "STABLE MAJORITY" (SOME-
THING WHICH BOTH CARRILLO AND GONZALEZ CAUTIONED AGAINST
AND SUAREZ LATER DISMISSED).

2. SUAREZ THEN UNEXPECTEDLY TOOK THE FLOOR AND EXTEMPOR-
ANEOUSLY RESPONDED TO HIS CRITICS TO CLOSE THE APRIL
6 DEBATE. HE REITERATED THE GOVT'S COMMITMENT TO

CONSENSUS AND THE MONCLOA PACTS, DEFENDED ITS RECORD, AND INDICATED HE WOULD NOT GIVE FRAGA THE COALITION HE SOUGHT. SUAREZ' INTERVENTION CARRIED THE DAY, ELICITING VARIOUS DEGREES OF PRAISE FROM LEADERS OF ALL PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS AND ENCOMIUMS FROM THE PRESS, INCLUDING "EL PAIS," WHICH HAD BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF HIS APRIL 5 SPEECH. BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT, THE 2-DAY PLENARY THEN ADJOURNED WITHOUT THE PRESENTATION OF MOTIONS EITHER FOR OR AGAINST THE GOVT. END SUMMARY

3. THE 2-DAY CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES PLENARY DEALING WITH THE FEBRUARY CABINET SHUFFLE AND THE GOVT'S PROGRAM, WHICH SUAREZ KICKED OFF WITH HIS APRIL 5 SPEECH (REFTTEL), CONTINUED APRIL 6 WITH PRESENTATIONS BY LEADERS OF THE REMAINING PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS. IT CONCLUDED WITH A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL EXTEMPORANEOUS INTERVENTION BY SUAREZ IN WHICH HE ANSWERED MAJOR POINTS OF CRITICISM CONTAINED IN THE SPEECHES OF HIS ADVERSARIES. A SUMMARY OF THE HIGH POINTS OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SPEECHES FOLLOWS:

4. FRAGA (AP): THE GOVT IS NOT GOVERNING, IT IS ONLY POSTPONING THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD. MOST IMPORTANT, CONFIDENCE CANNOT BE RESTORED WITHOUT THE REESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC ORDER AND GENERAL SECURITY. THE GOVT IS WEAK BECAUSE OF ITS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MINORITY CHARACTER, BECAUSE OF ITS ZIG-ZAG POLICIES WHICH RESULT FROM THE NECESSITY OF PACTING TODAY WITH THIS POLITICAL GROUP AND TOMORROW WITH THAT ONE, BECAUSE OF ITS COMPLEXES DERIVING FROM ATTEMPTING TO PURSUE A POLICY OF THE CENTER-LEFT WITH VOTES OF THE CENTER-RIGHT. IN ORDER TO GOVERN, CLEAR AND STABLE MAJORITIES ARE NECESSARY; NOTHING CAN BE RESOLVED WITHOUT A GOVT SUPPORTED BY A SOLID PARLIAMENTARY BASE. IN SUMMARY, "THINGS ARE NOT BEING DONE, THE STATE IS DETERIORATING EVERY DAY, POLITICAL LIFE HAS NO PULSE, THE GOVT HAS NO CLEAR POLICY LINE..."

5. CARRILLO (PCE): TYPICALLY LACING HIS PRESENTATION WITH HUMOR, CARRILLO BEGAN BY EXPRESSING HIMSELF NOT "SURPRISED BY FRAGA'S PRESENTATION OF HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE PRIME MINISTRY." IN A SENSE IT IS TRUE, HE CONTINUED, THAT THE POLICY OF THE GOVT HAS NOT CHANGED, AND WE AGREE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THAT A POLICY OF CONSENSUS IS INDISPENSABLE. THE PCE HAS DEFENDED THE MONCLOA PACTS MORE THAN THE GOVT ITSELF HAS, AND THE GOVT HAS NOT COMPLIED WITH SOME ASPECTS OF THOSE AGREEMENTS. NOW THAT THE DELAY OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS UNTIL

AFTER THE CONSTITUTION APPEARS IRREVERSIBLE, WE ARE IN FAVOR OF AN AGREEMENT TO COMPLETE THE CONSTITUTION AND SUBMIT IT TO REFERENDUM BEFORE THE SUMMER.

6. GONZALEZ (PSOE): I DO NOT WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO ANY CLIMATE OF CATASTROPHISM OR LACK OF CONFIDENCE, BUT THE PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SLOWNESS IN ADAPTING OUTMODED STRUCTURES TO SPANISH REALITY, NOT ABOUT THE RAPIDITY OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS. THE PRINCIPAL TASK CONFRONTING THE GOVT IS TO INCREASE THE COUNTRY'S CONFIDENCE AND DIMINISH INSECURITY. THE MONCLOA PACTS

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/066 W

-----044336 072030Z /53

R 071923Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4157
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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REPRESENT AN "OXYGEN BAG" FOR THE GOVT, AND I THINK THEY SHOULD BE CONTINUED IN ORDER THAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN CONTINUE TO GOVERN WITH TRANQUILITY AND WITH THE CONSENSUS OF ALL POLITICAL FORCES. WE BELIEVE THE POLITICS OF CONSENSUS IS NECESSARY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE CALL ON THE GOVT TO COMPLY WITH ITS COMMITMENTS, AMONG THEM GREATER ATTENTION TO UNEMPLOYMENT AND GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN MONETARY POLICY. THE GOVT MUST GOVERN, AND IT IS IN

THE BEST CIRCUMSTANCES TO DO SO. IF IT CANNOT GOVERN,
IT WILL HAVE TO SEARCH FOR ANOTHER FORMULA, SOME OF WHICH
HAVE BEEN OFFERED HERE (A REFERENCE TO FRAGA'S PRESENTA-
TION). BUT WE BELIEVE THAT NO FORMULA WILL ENABLE THE
GOVT TO GOVERN BETTER THAN WILL THE FRAMEWORK OF THE
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POLITICS OF CONSENSUS.

7. SUAREZ THEN TOOK THE FLOOR TO ADDRESS PRINCIPAL POINTS
OF CRITICISM CONTAINED IN THE SPEECHES OF THE OTHER
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP LEADERS (SEE ALSO REFTEL):

--PRE-AUTONOMIES: THEY WILL HAVE REAL CONTENT;
DELAYS THAT HAVE BEEN ENCOUNTERED IN THIS COMPLEX PROCESS
ARE OUTSIDE THE CONTROL BOTH OF THE GOVT AND THE REGIONS.
NEXT WEEK CONCRETE MEASURES WILL BE APPROVED FOR CATA-
LONIA AND NEGOTIATIONS WILL BEGIN IN THE CASE OF THE
BASQUE COUNTRY.

--PUBLIC ORDER: PUBLIC ORDER PROBLEMS DID NOT
BEGIN IN 1976; THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT THEY BEGAN TO BE
SOLVED. THE GOVT IS DEEPLY COMMITTED TO ELIMINATING
THE CAUSES OF COMMON CRIME, DEALING WITH TERRORISM,
AND TRANSFORMING THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES INTO A CORPS
THAT GUARANTEES LIBERTY WHILE MAKING IT COMPATIBLE WITH
AUTHORITY. HE THEN DETAILED SPECIFIC STEPS BEING TAKEN
TO ACCOMPLISH THESE ENDS.

--THE CONSTITUTION: THE CONSTITUTION MUST BE APPROVED
EXPEDITIOUSLY AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MUST BE HELD SOON,
ALTHOUGH THEY MUST COME AFTER THE REFERENDUM. THE MAJOR
REASON WHY THE GOVT COULD NOT KEEP ITS COMMITMENT TO
CONVOKE MUNICIPALS BEFORE THE END OF 1977 WAS THE
PARLIAMENT'S INSISTENCE ON DRAFTING THE CONSTITUTION,
RATHER THAN LETTING A TEAM OF CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERTS
DO SO. THIS HAD DELAYED THE CONSTITUTION AND, CON-
SEQUENTLY, MUNICIPALS AS WELL.

--GOVT BY CONSENSUS: WE HAVE NO INTENTION TO SLOW
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THE PACE OF OUR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT. THE GOVT IS
LIVING UP TO ITS ELECTORAL COMMITMENTS IN GOVERNING
BY CONSENSUS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE ARE HAVING
TO CHANGE THE ENTIRE (POLITICAL) EDIFICE WITHOUT BOTHER-

ING ITS INHABITANTS OR SOILING THEM WITH THE DIRT OF THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT. WE ARE BUILDING THAT NEW EDIFICE ATOP THE OLD ONE, AND IN IT THERE WILL BE COMFORTABLE AND AMPLE LODGING FOR ALL POLITICAL OPTIONS AND FOR EACH ONE OF THE 36 MILLION SPANIARDS. SUAREZ LATER TOLD THE PRESS, IN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO FRAGA'S EXTENDED HAND, THAT "THE EQUILIBRIUM OF PARLIAMENTARY FORCES WOULD NOT BE BROKEN, AT LEAST NOT BY UCD."

8. THE DEBATE THEN TERMINATED WITHOUT THE PRESENTATION OF MOTIONS EITHER FOR OR AGAINST THE GOVT, AS HAD BEEN AGREED BY THE VARIOUS PARTY SPOKESMEN BEFORE SUAREZ SPOKE. BOTH THE STYLE, PARTICULARLY THE FACT THAT HE SPOKE WITH ONLY A FEW NOTES, AND THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS ADDRESS WERE WIDELY PRAISED. WHEN THE PLENARY ADJOURNED, A NUMBER OF OPPOSITION LEADERS, INCLUDING FRAGA, PERSONALLY CONGRATULATED THE PRIME MINISTER ON HIS SPEECH, WHILE OTHERS PRAISED IT TO MEMBERS OF THE PRESS. FOR CATALAN MINORITY LEADER MIGUEL ROCA, IT WAS AN "EXCELLENT SPEECH," WHILE THE COMMUNISTS (CARRILLO AND TAMAMES) COMMENTED ON HOW MUCH BETTER A PRESENTATION IT WAS THAN SUAREZ'S APRIL 5 PERFORMANCE. FELIPE GONZALEZ MADE SIMILAR REMARKS, ADDING THAT SUAREZ' SPEECH HAD CORRECTED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOVT HAD VEERED TO THE RIGHT. INDICATIVE OF THE MADRID PRESS' RESPONSE WERE "ABC'S" DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEECH AS "BRILLIANT" AND "EL PAIS'S" ASSERTION THAT IT HAD PRODUCED A "MORAL VICTORY FOR UCD." "EL PAIS" ADDED, HOWEVER, ITS HOPE THAT SUAREZ' DEMONSTRATED ORATORICAL ABILITY WOULD MEAN THAT HE WOULD NOW

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/066 W

-----044408 072030Z /53

R 071923Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4158
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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ADDRESS PARLIAMENT MORE OFTEN AND ALSO GIVE PERIODIC
PRESS CONFERENCES IN ORDER TO KEEP THE COUNTRY BETTER
INFORMED ABOUT THE GOVT'S PROGRAM AND THE PROGRESS OF
THE TRANSITION.

9. COMMENT: THE 2-DAY DEBATE HAS BEEN A PERSONAL TRIUMPH
FOR SUAREZ. HIS TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE APRIL 6 SPEECH
SHOULD ESPECIALLY BE A SHOT IN THE ARM TO HIS OWN AND
UCD'S SAGGING FORTUNES IN THE POLLS AND SHOULD DISPEL
RUMORS THAT SUAREZ WAS RUNNING DOWN PHYSICALLY AND WAS
NO LONGER UP TO THE JOB. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER,
IT ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE CLEARED THE AIR CONSIDERABLY
AND TO HAVE RESTORED SOME OF THE LOST "ERA OF GOOD
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FEELING" DYNAMIC AND MOMENTUM WHICH ARE SO IMPORTANT
IF THE CONSTITUTION IS GOING TO MOVE THROUGH THE
"CORTES" WITH A MINIMUM OF DIFFICULTY. STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, PRIME MINISTER, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS, MEETING PROCEEDINGS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID03750
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780151-0328
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780481/aaaacqyz.tel
Line Count: 310
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e99cd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MADRID 3687
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3042889
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUAREZ EMERGES VICTORIOUS FROM 2-DAY PLENARY
TAGS: PINT, SP, (SUAREZ GONZALES, ADOLFO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e99cd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014